

ATTITUDE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession according to their gender, locality of residence, locality of educational institution, stream of study, and annual income of the parents. A descriptive survey design was adopted with a sample of 207 postgraduate students selected using a purposive sampling technique. A three-point attitude scale was constructed and validated by the investigator to collect data. The scale comprised of 40 statements including both positive and negative statements. The collected data were analysed with statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and 't'-test. The results revealed that postgraduate students had favourable attitude towards the teaching profession. Further, it was found that the variables such as gender, locality of residence, locality of educational institution, stream of study, and annual income of the parents had no influence on postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession. This shows that the postgraduate students had similar attitude towards the teaching profession.

KEYWORDS: Attitude Towards Teaching, Favourable Attitude, Postgraduate Students, Teaching Profession.

INTRODUCTION

Allport (1935) defined attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Baysal (1981) defines the attitude as a cognitive, affective and behavioural response which is organised on the basis of experience and knowledge, to the individual or any object or event around his/her environment. With regard to these definitions, attitude can be defined as a response which can be positive or

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negative to any situation, event or object. Attitudes of people towards their profession have an effect on their performance. This also applies to the teaching profession.

The teachers play an important role in moulding and shaping the attitudes, habits, manners and above all, the character and personality of the students (Aggarwal, 2010). According to Brown (2001) teachers who are highly motivated and have positive attitudes towards their profession can establish a good relationship. Hence, to be successful in the teaching profession, which requires patience, dedication, and continuous operation, it is important to like and willingly practice this profession. Teachers who are generally unenthusiastic about the teaching profession reported in one study, that they were more distressed about their teaching situation than were teachers who were enthusiastic (Litt & Turk, 1985). Hence, for the professional growth of the teachers and improvements in education, the attitudes held by them are very important. How a teacher performs his/her duty as a teacher is dependent, to a great extent, on his/her attitudes, values and beliefs. In addition, a teacher's attitude also influences the behaviour of his/her students. Thus, effective and productive learning for students can be achieved only by teachers with desirable attitudes.

In this context, the investigator has tried to explore the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession. Generally, most of the postgraduate students from arts and science streams will join M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes after completing their postgraduate degree. Simultaneously, they are appearing in the National Eligibility Test (NET) conducted by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi for qualifying themselves to work as teachers in colleges and universities. This shows that they are aspiring to serve as teachers in colleges and universities. So, it is necessary to find the nature of the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession. Thus, postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession forms the major aim of the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been designed to meet the following objectives:

1. To explore the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession.
2. To find out the difference in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession with respect to a) gender b) locality of residence c) 'locality of educational institution d) stream of study, and e) annual income of the parents.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were framed for the present study:

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female postgraduate students towards the teaching profession.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of urban and rural postgraduate students towards the teaching profession.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of postgraduate students belonging to urban and rural educational institutions towards the teaching profession.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of postgraduate students belonging to arts and science streams towards the teaching profession.
5. There is no significant difference in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession with regard to their parents' annual income i.e., \geq Rs.1,00,000 and $<$ Rs.1,00,000.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

METHOD

In this study, the researcher intends to investigate the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession. Thus, normative survey method was used in this study.

SAMPLE

The sample of the present study consists of 207 second year postgraduate students studying in the University Departments of Periyar University and five arts and science colleges affiliated to Periyar University located within Salem district, Tamil Nadu, India were selected by adopting purposive sampling technique.

TOOLS USED

The researcher has developed and validated an attitude scale to measure the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession. After a thorough study of available literature, 52 statements were written in the first draft of the scale. After the pilot study, 12 statements had to be deleted from the draft and 40 statements were selected for the main study. Out of these, 26 were positive statements and 14 were negative statements. The students have to rate their attitude on a three-point scale ranging from "Agree" to "Disagree". All the statements were given a score from 3 to 1 for positive statements and 1 to 3 for

negative statements. The sum of these scores provides the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession. The maximum possible score is 120 and the minimum score is 40. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.72 by split-half method. Further, content validity was estimated for the scale.

DATA COLLECTION

For the data collection, the researcher has visited to the selected University Departments of Periyar University and five arts and science colleges affiliated to Periyar University in Salem district, Tamil Nadu and collected the data from the students. The data were collected with the help of the developed research tool. The research tool was distributed to the students and the researcher assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used for research purpose only. It was further explained that there was no right or wrong answer to any of the statements of the attitude scale.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation and 't' - test were employed for the analysis of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The first objective of the study was to assess the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession. For this, mean and standard deviation was computed for the whole attitude scale and results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Postgraduate Students' Attitude Towards the Teaching Profession.

Variable	N	M	SD	Minimum Score	Neutral Score	Maximum Score
Attitude towards the Teaching Profession	207	94.78	8.67	40	80	120

From Table 1, it can be seen that the mean attitude score is 94.78. The maximum score and minimum score one could obtain for attitude towards the teaching profession were 120 and 40 respectively. The neutral score of the attitude scale is 80. The mean attitude score is far greater than the neutral score. Hence, it is concluded that postgraduate students had positive attitude

towards the teaching profession. The result of the present study is supported by the studies of Akbaba (2013), Alkhateeb (2013), Musa and Bichi (2015), Oruc (2011), Sahayarani and Stanly (2014), Sahin (2010), Sener (2015), Sharma (2016), Singh (2012) and Yildirim (2012) which reported that the selected samples have favourable attitude towards the teaching profession. But the present result is contrary to the results obtained by the studies conducted by Maliki (2013) and Pancholi and Bharwad (2015) which found that majority of the teachers have negative attitude towards the teaching profession. Further, the studies of Egwu (2015), Kassa (2014) and Ogunlade and Makinde (2012) reported that the teacher trainees have negative attitude towards the teaching profession.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

In order to determine if there were any differences between the mean scores that postgraduate students obtained on the whole attitude scale, 't'-test was employed and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean, SD and 't'- test Scores of Postgraduate Students' Attitude towards the Teaching Profession.

S.No	Variable		n	M	SD	df	t	p	Result
1	Gender	Male	46	93.74	8.85	205	0.91	.363	ns*
		Female	161	95.07	8.64				
2	Locality of Residence	Rural	132	94.24	9.11	205	1.20	.231	ns*
		Urban	75	95.72	8.21				
3	Locality of Educational Institution	Rural	94	94.85	8.12	205	0.11	.912	ns*
		Urban	113	94.71	9.37				
4	Stream of Study	Arts	80	95.81	8.21	205	1.38	.169	ns*
		Science	127	94.12	9.13				
5	Annual Income of the Parents	= Rs.1,00,000	78	94.83	7.61	205	0.08	.936	ns*
		<Rs.1,00,000	129	94.74	9.48				

* $p > .05$, two-tailed

*ns - Not Significant

When the attitude scores of postgraduate students with respect to gender given in row (1) of Table 2 are taken into consideration, it could be suggested that there was no significant difference between male ($M = 93.74$; $SD = 8.85$) and

female ($M = 95.07$; $SD = 8.64$) students, where $t(205) = 0.91$, $p > .05$. Accordingly, it can be asserted that male and female postgraduate students did not differ in their attitude towards the teaching profession. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. Similar results were found in the studies conducted by Ghanti and Jagadesh (2009), Kassa (2014), Maheshwari (2014), Panda (2001), Sahin (2010) and Sharma (2016) which reported no significant difference in the attitude of selected samples with respect to their gender. But this result is contrary to the results of the studies of Banerjee and Behera (2014), Chandramma (2015), Ghosh and Bairgya (2010), Guneyli and Aslan (2009), Khurshid, Gardezi, and Noureen (2014), Musa and Bichi (2015), Pancholi and Bharwad (2015), Sahayarani and Stanly (2014), Sener (2015), Singh (2012), Trivedi (2011) and Yadav (2012). These studies revealed that female respondents have favourable attitude towards the teaching profession rather than male respondents. Further, a study by Yildirim (2012) reported significant difference between male and female teacher candidates in their attitude towards the teaching profession.

A look at row 2 of Table 2 reveals that there was no significant difference between rural ($M = 94.24$; $SD = 9.11$) and urban ($M = 95.72$; $SD = 8.21$) postgraduate students in their attitude towards the teaching profession, $t(205) = 1.20$, $p > .05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that locality of residence has no significant influence on postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession. Consequently, the null hypothesis is retained. This finding is in line with the studies conducted by Panda (2001), Sahayarani and Stanly (2014) and Sharma (2016) which indicated no significant difference in the attitude of selected samples towards the teaching profession with regard to locality of their residence. However, the result of the present study is inconsistent with the studies conducted by Banerjee and Behera (2014) and Vaithianathan (2009) which reported that the selected samples differ in their attitude towards the teaching profession with regard to locality of residence. A study conducted by Singh (2012) revealed that rural postgraduate students have favourable attitude towards the teaching profession rather than urban postgraduate students. Further, Pancholi and Bharwad (2015), in their study, found that rural teachers have better attitude towards the teaching profession than urban teachers.

Row 3 of Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference between the postgraduate students studying in the educational institutions located in rural ($M = 94.85$; $SD = 8.12$) and urban ($M = 94.71$; $SD = 9.37$) areas, where $t(205) = 0.11$, $p > .05$. According to this finding, it can be said that locality of educational institution has no significant influence on postgraduate students' attitudes towards the teaching profession. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. This

finding of the present study is corresponding to the studies conducted by Pushpam (2003) and Vaithianathan (2009) which reported that locality of educational institution did not influence the attitude of selected samples towards the teaching profession.

From data presented in row 4 of Table 2 above, there was no indication of statistically significant difference between arts ($M = 95.81$; $SD = 8.21$) and science ($M = 94.12$; $SD = 9.13$) postgraduate students in their attitude towards the teaching profession, where $t(205) = 1.38$, $p > .05$. Hence, it can be asserted that the postgraduate students belong to arts and science streams did not differ in their attitude towards the teaching profession. Consequently, the null hypothesis is retained. The results of the present study concur with the results of the studies conducted by Banerjee and Behera (2014), Ghosh and Bairgya (2010), Incik and Kilic (2014), Musa and Bichi (2015), Pancholi and Bharwad (2015), Pushpam (2003) and Sahin (2010) which indicate no significant difference in the attitude of selected samples on the basis of stream of study. But this finding is in contradiction with the findings of the studies of Akbaba (2013), Khan, Nadeem, and Basu (2013), and Ustuner, Demirtas, and Comert (2009). These studies revealed that stream of study differentiated the teaching attitude of selected samples. Further, Maheshwari (2014) and Sahayarani and Stanly (2014), in their studies, observed that the teacher trainees belong to science stream have more favourable attitude towards the teaching profession rather than the teacher trainees belong to arts stream. In another study, Trivedi (2011) found that the teachers belong to arts stream have favourable attitude towards the teaching profession rather than the teachers belong to science stream.

The results presented in row 5 of Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference between postgraduate students' parents earning \geq Rs.1,00,000 ($M = 94.83$, $SD = 7.61$) and $<$ Rs.1,00,000 ($M = 94.74$, $SD = 9.48$) per annum in the attitude of postgraduate students towards the teaching profession, where $t(205) = 0.08$, $p > .05$. Hence, it can be concluded that annual income of the parents did not influence the postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession. Consequently, the null hypothesis is retained. This present result extends previous findings of the studies done by Guneyli and Aslan (2009), Maheshwari (2014), Pushpam (2003) and Yesil (2011) which indicated that family income and socio-economic status did not influence the attitude of selected samples towards the teaching profession. However, the results of the present study are inconsistent with the studies of Singh (2012) and Vaithianathan (2009) who reported that the respondents belonging to different parental annual income levels and socio-economic status differ in their attitude towards the teaching profession.

From the above discussion, it is very clear that the postgraduate students, in general, had favourable attitude towards the teaching profession. When the postgraduate students' attitude was studied according to their demographic features such as gender, locality of residence, locality of educational institution, stream of study, and annual income of the parents, it was observed that these variables had no influence on their attitude towards the teaching profession.

CONCLUSIONS

The education system and especially teachers have very important roles in raising a healthy society and qualified individuals. One of the important factors that affect a teacher's success and efficiency is his/her attitude towards the profession. In order to be successful in teaching profession, one needs to love the profession and perform it willingly. By keeping this in mind, the present study was conducted to determine the postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession according to their demographic features. Taking the results obtained into consideration, it was seen that the postgraduate students had a favourable attitude towards the teaching profession. Further, it was found that the variables such as gender, locality of residence, locality of educational institution, stream of study, and annual income of the parents had no determinant effect on postgraduate students' attitude towards the teaching profession. This indicates that the postgraduate students possess similar attitude towards the teaching profession. The findings of the present study will be helpful to the future students who want to join teaching profession and provide data which shall be helpful for parents to decide about teaching as profession for their children.

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